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NEBC MEETING NEWS

January 1997. The January meeting was entitled "Annual Exchange of Botanical Explorations, Exploits, and Excursions" (also known as the annual Show & Tell). Nine members participated in presenting slides showcasing summer travels or recent research.

Pam Weatherbee, Paul Somers, and Ray Angelo showed slides from the Club's Centennial trip to Newfoundland in early July. Club members who did not attend the trip missed spectacular plants (*Cypripedium pubescens* var. *planipetalum, C. reginae, Rubus arcticus, Lychnis alpina, Adiantum aleuticum, Mertensia maritima, Carex pauciflora, Botrychium lunaria, Schizaea pusilla*) as well as caribou, moose, icebergs, outstanding Bed & Breakfasts, and the world's largest blueberry.

Lisa Standley reported on a backpacking trip north of Alaska's Brooks Range, where familiar arctic/alpine species such as rhodora and *Dryas* mingle with western *Pedicularis, Oxytropis,* arctic poppies, and *Saxifraga oppositifolia,* as well as the world's smallest willow. Caribou, grizzly bear, wolves, and wolverine were also highlights of the trip.

Norton Nickerson described a successful wetland mitigation project associated with replacement of salt marsh affected by construction of the MBTA's Neponset River Bridge. He and his team successfully transplanted *Spartina alterniflora* into a mud flat that lacked vegetation and created new high marsh and low marsh by excavating an upland area and transplanting plugs from the adjacent marsh.

David Hunt has been surveying natural communities in the Adirondacks for the NY Natural Heritage Program, attempting to locate and document the best example of each of the 100+ communities in this region. He showed examples of a variety of Adirondack communities, and described a new "sea level fen" community which is located at the upper edge of salt marshes, and contains *Scirpus pungens, Cladium, Eleocharis rostellata, Iris prismatica,* and *Carex hormathodes.*

Neal Sawyer took the Club to Central and South America, showing pictures of his favorite genera (*Deprea* and *Larnax*) in the Solanaceae and their habitats from Costa Rica to Bolivia. Neal showed photos of several taxa in this group, related to *Physalis,* and discussed taxonomic challenges. Neal has collected these

plants in cloud forests in Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Bolivia, and traveled through the highlands of Peru, northern Ecuador, and Bolivia's high elevation grasslands.

Barre Hellquist traveled in northern regions in search of water lilies. Enroute, he saw a unique dark pink form of the Great Lakes endemic thistle, *Cirsium pitcheri.* With John Weirsma, Barre succeeded in locating true *Nymphaea tetragona* in Manitoba. The team found a hybrid of *N. tetragona* and *N. tuberosa,* documenting the occurrence of all possible *Nymphaea* hybrids except *N. tetragona* and *N. leibergii* - next year's goal.

George Newman ended the evening with a return to arctic/alpine vegetation, this time at sea level on Brier Island, the westernmost point in Nova Scotia. The island contains the only occurrence of *Geum peckii* outside of New Hampshire, growing with *Sarracenia* in a sea-level bog, as well as the southernmost stand of *Betula michauxii.* George closed with photos of a new large stand of *Veronica alpina* along the Tuckerman's Ravine trail.

February 1997. The speaker was Elizabeth Kneiper, President of the Friends of the Farlow, who spoke on "Boston Lichens: Then and Now." Ms. Kneiper began by providing an excellent overview of the biological diversity and biology of lichens, a taxonomic group much overlooked by most botanists despite their diversity and ecological importance.

Ms. Kneiper described the results of a study she conducted in 1978 and 1979, comparing current lichen diversity in the Boston area with historical diversity during the late 1800s. She developed an historical checklist based on the published and archival records of the many amateur and professional lichenologists who worked in the Boston area in the last century, particularly Edward Tuckerman and Clara Cummings. Results of the study show a dramatic and alarming change in lichen biodiversity over the 100-year interval, with a 50 percent reduction from 237 species in 105 genera to only 124 species in 62 genera. *Peltigera* was reduced to a single species from 6; the *Lobaria* complex, a climax community of mature woodlands, had disappeared; the epiphytic fruticose lichens including *Usnea* and *Ramalina* had virtually vanished, although these were still present outside of the Boston area and in the Berkshires. The species remaining tended to be those dem-

onstrated to be tolerant of poor air quality and crustose species found on calcareous habitats such as concrete and mortar.

Ms. Kneiper's recent Boston inventories show that species not recorded in 1978–79, particularly foliose and crustose species, are now present in the area. It may be that rare species located in the 1978–1979 study were pioneer recolonizers, rather than relict holdouts. Boston lichen diversity may also benefit from experimental (and unintentional) reintroductions from sources that include lichen-covered boulders used to build the Japanese Garden at the Museum of Fine Arts as well as the branches and trunks of the Christmas trees imported from Nova Scotia.

—Lisa A. Standley, Recording Secretary.